

REMARKS
ON
MR MASON'S
TREATISE
UPON
TEA:

Subsequent to which, is exhibited
A true Pourtrait of the QUALITIES
and EFFECTS of that Liquor.

By J. N. Surgeon.

*Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato,
Sed magis amica Veritas.*

L O N D O N :

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Some Remarks on Mr Mason's Treatise up- on Tea, &c.

THE infusion of Tea being come into general use here in *England*, a treatise on that subject, containing a physical disquisition into the nature and qualities of this vegetable, and including an account of its effects, salutary or pernicious, upon the human constitution, from whence a summary of useful knowledge might be deduced, would have been an undertaking highly laudable, worthy of the best attention, and acceptable to the publick. But if this was Mr MASON's design, when he engaged to consider *the good and bad effects of Tea, &c.* now before me, I cannot but think he has greatly fail'd in the performance; for, to pass by his natural history of this exotic, which ex-
hibits

hibits no material new discovery, if we consider his account of the *physical virtues of Tea*, of its *agreeableness to particular constitutions*, of the *propriety and impropriety of seasons for drinking it*, and the manner of *his explanation of its effects*, we find ourselves disappointed of the promis'd satisfaction.

It may not be improper to observe that enquiries into the nature of all substances, medicinal or alimentary, are ever within the province of physicians, or a practitioner of some branch of physick, persons alone qualified for such a work. Whether this gentleman has been educated in law or divinity, the stranger is left to guess; but that *medicine* hath not been the object of his studies, is plain throughout this whole performance. And that I may not be said to lay false accusations, I will point out some passages, from whence what I have asserted

serted will fairly appear; to which my purpose, is to add a more just account of the operation and effects of Tea.

In the first page of the introduction, our author seems to be aware of the unkind reception of his treatise, “supposing it might give offence to some.” What sort of readers those are whose displeasure he apprehended, he does not say: they cannot be persons of high degree and fortune, because he not only indulges them in the use of Tea, but grants they may receive many advantages from it; nor can they be those of inferior rank and mean abilities, because these are the very persons for whom his pamphlet was design’d as a dissuasive against an imprudent use of this liquor; besides, he might be less apprehensive of offending people of this condition, as they seldom have money to waste in the purchase of books,
nor

capacity nor leifure to perufe them if they had. But men of fcience and erudition, phyficians, may poffibly be offended at this treatife, becaufe it does not afford them the fatisfactory information which might reafonably be expected, and which the title-page promifes to furnifh out.

In the following paragraph is a recital from fome authors of the virtues of *Tea*, viz. “ that it cools, al-
 “ lays drought, helps digestion,
 “ makes clean the ftomach, attenu-
 “ ates vifcidities, augments the velo-
 “ city of the fluggifh circulation, in-
 “ vigorates, gives new fpirits, pro-
 “ motes fecretions, ftrengthens the
 “ bowels, and prompts natural eva-
 “ cuations, &c.” Thefe are hard words to a *poor* reader! Who thefe authors are I know not; furely men of the learned faculty of phyfick, would not deliver themfelves in this implicit as well as inconfiftent manner.

ner. Are cooling and allaying drought compatible with augmenting the velocity of the circulation? And what congruity is there between these properties, and that of making clean the stomach, which is generally done by *emetic* medicines? In fact, these virtues of Tea are as imaginary, as they are confusedly blended in the description; and tho' in the next page Mr MASON affirms this same Tea to be good, on many accounts, for persons of high living, I believe it will appear in the sequel, that it is no less prejudicial to them, than to persons in inferior stations.

This gentleman, p. 3, tells his readers he will “ in the following
 “ sheets, relate some of the physical
 “ virtues of Tea, and how far they
 “ are conducive to the preservation
 “ of the health of our *English* con-
 “ stitutions.” This was the very
 thing I long'd to know, and if Mr
 MASON

MASON had been as good as his word, he had sav'd me the pains of these remarks upon his performance. Over-looking now the natural history of this shrub therein contain'd, which is chiefly transcrib'd from others, I come to p. 15. in order to find the account of its virtues; and here our author says, they are strangely controverted; and then quotes the opinions of SIM. PAULI, PECKLIN, SCHRODER, QUINCY, TEN-RHYNE, KEMPFER, and Dr SHORT. Alas! of what use is this to the inquisitive reader? The sentiments of these writers were known long ago, and if Mr MASON has nothing to add from his own knowledge and experience, he has done nothing. True indeed it is, that it is not possible for Tea to abound with half the qualities it is said to do, and I verily believe the leaf adulterated with *Japan* earth and allom, in the manner mention'd by him, p. 22. and used for the natural

tural Tea, would not be so insalubrious to some constitutions, as the infusion of the same before such adulteration. But more of this hereafter.

I proceed to take notice of this gentleman's account of the use of Tea amongst us. At *p.* 27, he says, he shall advise it in a manner suitable to health, constitution, &c. shewing to whom it is, and is not agreeable; and then lets the reader know that “ it
 “ is taken in the morning, as a meal;
 “ that some chuse green, others bo-
 “ hea, some like cream and sugar in
 “ it, others only one of these, and
 “ others neither, which he thinks
 “ the most polite; that a very mate-
 “ rial part of the breakfast is toast
 “ and butter, or, as they like, bread
 “ spread with butter, or a hot roll
 “ well butter'd; the Tea serves to
 “ wash down the more substantial
 “ part of the breakfast, and without
 “ these necessary concomitants, such

“ as have good appetites will be much
 “ disappointed from Tea only.” Wonderful discoveries! Does Mr MASON think any one person is ignorant of these things? Or can he believe any body is so stupid as to imagine Tea only, a competent breakfast? But let us hear some of his favourite benefits of Tea, *p.* 28. After a night’s debauch, the consequence being a thirst, head-ach, nausea, &c. persons drink Tea medicinally more than for a meal.
 “ In these cases it is taken to cleanse
 “ the stomach, allay the thirst, to com-
 “ fort and brace up the relax’d state
 “ of the fibres;” Well, and how does Tea do there? Why, “ it abates the
 “ ebullition of the heated blood, gent-
 “ ly invites a moderate sweat, velli-
 “ cates the intestines to empty them-
 “ selves, and by its diuretic efficacy
 “ promotes a plentiful discharge by u-
 “ rine, and soon reduceth every part
 “ to good order and harmony, by
 “ expelling the latent fumes which
 “ occasion’d

“ occasion’d those sick fits, and disagreeable qualms.” Behold the amazing depth of this writer’s *medicinal* knowledge! *Thirst, head-ach, nausea, &c.* are to be cur’d by a medicine, the surprising virtues of which are *cooling, sudorific, cathartic, and diuretic*, all at once; nor are these all, for it is *astringent* too, since he positively asserts immediately after, that “ green Tea is most proper for these purposes, as being most astringent.” The bare recital of these passages is sufficient.

He goes on, “ Tea likewise is a very good breakfast with cream, sugar, and bread and butter for thin, hectic persons, as being more nutritious, when join’d with those substantial good ingredients;” and then proceeds in his usual manner to re-enumerate the several virtues of it. Nor is he content with one repetition, for having just before pronounc’d Tea
a medicine

a medicine in sickness, and alimentary in time of health, *p.* 30, he says,
 “ Notwithstanding, I allow Tea to be
 “ a good breakfast for some persons
 “ in health, so also it is for some
 “ others, who, by irregularities and
 “ excess, put themselves out of order,
 “ and are therewith reliev’d; so like-
 “ wise it is good, either taken phyfi-
 “ cally, or as a meal, for the valetu-
 “ dinarian sort, or hectical habits,
 “ when drunk with cream and sugar.”
 Is not this the same thing over and
 over again? So likewise, *p.* 32. hav-
 ing prescrib’d it good for the *vapours*
 and *scurvy*, well sweeten’d with cream,
 or boil’d new milk, repeats, that
 “ thus prepar’d, it abounds with these
 “ and many more salutary virtues,
 “ and is a wholesome nutritious
 “ breakfast for many persons.” *P.* 35.
 he says, Tea-drinking in the afternoon
 may be good for such persons as eat
 large meals, and drink much wine,
 “ in these circumstances, I say, Tea is
 “ requisite

“ requisite to cool, dilute, and forward digestion.” But I say, it is *not* requisite, for boil’d water alone, or any other simple diluting liquor, would answer all these purposes better than Tea; and that there is no more reason for ascribing any virtue to it in these circumstances, than in cases of the *Gout*, *Stone*, and *Gravel*, cases wherein Mr MASON himself thinks it of no service. But to let all this pass, how contradictory is this writer to himself! Let the reader but turn to p. 24, and there he will find him give a quite different opinion of Tea. After describing the manner of its preparation in *India*, in which it yields a juice of so sharp, corrosive, and poisonous a nature, as to burn the labourer’s hands to an intolerable degree, he says, “ it is plain, after all
 “ the repeated methods they use to free
 “ their Tea from this juice, still so
 “ much of that quality will remain,
 “ as to render it very corrosive,
 “ as

“ as may be proved by the infu-
 “ sion ; and this corrosive, acid,
 “ pernicious quality it abounds with,
 “ is modestly term’d astringent,
 “ which the greatest advocates are
 “ apprehensive may be hurtful to some
 “ ages and constitutions ; but what-
 “ ever reputation it hath gain’d from
 “ its physical virtues, it may be at-
 “ tributed to warm water, cream,
 “ sugar, and some other additions,
 “ and very little (*he might have said*
 “ *none at all*) to this grand exotic.”

This account of the *Indian* ma-
 nagement of Tea, I believe, is genuine,
 and what this gentleman observes af-
 ter it, is just and natural. He owns
 too, at *p.* 48. “ that he cannot re-
 “ concile the several qualities attributed
 “ to Tea (*which indeed are not to be*
 “ *reconcil’d*) some of them seeming
 “ quite the reverse to others ;” and at
p. 50. again confesses, “ that after all
 “ the boasting of its advocates, he
 “ cannot

“ cannot find any esteem which it
 “ doth merit, but that all its suppos’d
 “ efficacy consist in boil’d water,
 “ cream, and sugar.” But how he
 should be so forgetful as to affirm
 and deny the same thing, in so small
 a compass, is surprizing indeed. What
 remains of this gentleman’s book
 deserves no notice, as it is, for the
 most part, declamatory language, di-
 rected chiefly to women at the washing-
 tub, and others of the like station;
 indeed, he, more than once, declares
 to have undertaken his treatise for
 the use of these. I cannot say it is
 worthy of a more learned reader;
 for, setting aside a few scatter’d sen-
 tences of truth and judgment, there
 is no injustice in giving it the cha-
 racter of a confus’d heap of absur-
 dity and contradiction, quite different
 from what is advanc’d p. 30, 31,
 and 32. I will now set myself to
 prove, that Tea is not agreeable to
hectic constitutions: that it is quite
 prejudicial

prejudicial to persons labouring under *fevers*, of whatever kind; and that it often produces the *vapours*, so called; that it is not by all allow'd a good *stomachic*; that mixt with milk and sugar, it claims no *alterative* property; and that it is not more often blam'd than it ought to be.

This exotic leaf abounds with a most delightful fragrancy, on account of which, and the agreeable taste of its infusion, it is highly esteem'd in several parts of *Europe*; but no where more so, than in *England*, where the plentiful use of it is one of those evils which luxury has introduc'd amongst us; for that it is in any degree conducive to health, does not appear from an observation of the consequences of drinking it. The most that can be said in its favour is, that it does no harm; and if the defence of Tea could be thus far supported, there would be some plea
for

for its use: but tho' it sometimes, and to some constitutions, does no harm, a multitude of instances there are, which shew it to be unfriendly to the nerves, and injurious to the constitution.

Of this Tea there are several sorts, differing in goodness, but all pregnant with the same bad qualities in some degree or other, and may very well be consider'd under the one general name. Doubtless, that *hyson* which is the brightest-colour'd and well curl'd, having been best dried, is the least hurtful, and diffuses the most agreeable flavour; to come at the knowledge of the qualities of which, there is not a more certain way, than by observing its effects when taken into the stomach; and these are *heart-burn, oppression at the præcordia, anxiety, trembling*, and a long train of consequences to these.

First, then, I say, that Tea gives the *heart-burn*. There cannot be a more convincing argument of a degree of a corrosive quality existing in Tea than this; and if it be not more often the case than we find it is, this effect may very reasonably be suppos'd to be prevented by a mixture of *cream* or *milk*, and *butter*, which are generally taken in a pretty large quantity with it; for these are bodies that have an aptitude to defend the parts, and sheath acrimonious humours, indications pointed out in this disorder, which, tho' denominated a heart-burn, is defin'd an *affection of the stomach*, produced by some acid and biting humour, abrading the mucous lining of it, and preying upon its sensible substance.

But *anxiety*, and a *sense of weight upon the præcordia*, more often follow Tea-drinking, than the heart-burn.

burn. They are symptoms which arise one, two, or three hours, after the entertainment, to which the tender and delicate females, the studious and valetudinary are very subject. I have seen *the most amiable of her sex*, labouring under these complaints in a severe degree. This uneasiness, this oppression upon the nerves, derives its origin from some noxious quality in Tea, disturbing the regularity of their functions, which being begun in the stomach, affects it and the neighbouring parts chiefly, but is communicated to the whole system; and of this common effect of Tea the fair ladies are most sensible, being, for an immediate relief, oblig'd to have recourse to a cordial dram.

Trembling is another disorder with which Tea-drinkers are affected, which also is a distemper of the nerves. It may not indeed be easy, distinctly to unravel in what manner these
phæ-

phænomena are brought about, because the perviousness or solidity of the nervous bodies is a point not yet adjusted, and perhaps never will; and sensation, and muscular motion but imperfectly understood. It is allowed, however, on all hands, that digestion, nutrition, secretion, and proper performance of every function of the body, which are ever necessary to health, depend on a due degree of tensity and strength of the nerves. Hence arises a just equilibrium between the solids and fluids, the least deviation from which is a disease, and becomes the source of innumerable calamities. Let us now suppose the nerves and fibres relax'd by the use of Tea; a tremor succeeds, the digestive organs being impair'd, the body is supplied with an imperfect chyle, the secretions are vitiated, and all the viscera clog'd with impurities. And this relaxation being often repeated, reduces the whole

whole body to a languid state, from whence a scene of evils will arise, as *spasms, hysterics, melancholy, &c.* and a complication of these.

If such be the pernicious consequences of indulging in Tea in a healthful state, what may, or rather what may not, be expected from it in a *morbid* constitution? Will not the *hectical* patient, the tone of whose solids is already too much weaken'd, suffer an increasing debility? And will not persons labouring under *fevers* of other kinds, be prejudic'd in a like manner? I have already shewn how it is productive of the *vapours*, affections, which, it is well known, were never more common nor more obstinate than since the introduction of Tea amongst us; nor can any liquor, to the use of which these bad consequences are known to succeed, *fortify the stomach*, or claim any *alterative* property, however incorporated

rated with milk and sugar ; which verifies the conclusion, that “Tea is not more often blam’d than it ought to be.”

But here it may be objected, that we every day see people indulge in a liberal use of this favourite liquor, without feeling any of the bad effects represented. It is indeed true, we hear persons of *robust* habits, whose appetites are craving, and that drink much wine, boast of subduing large cups, not only without prejudice, but with pleasure and refreshment; to these is Tea not hurtful, and to these only can it safely be allow’d. But admitting the whole force of the objection, it does not justify an indiscriminate use of Tea. The operation of any medicine, receiv’d into the stomach, is ever uniform and invariable, but the effects will be different according to the constitution operated upon. If those
whose

whose fibres are rigid, and whose dispositions are bilious, or gouty, can elude the power of a destroying agent, it by no means follows, that the tender and delicate should not yield to its baneful influence. If it be replied, the far greater part, even of those whose habits of body are so constituted, do not experience any inconvenience from Tea, I say, tho' cream, milk, sugar, and butter, may prevent the appearance of an immediate detriment to some, yet remotely, and in the end, some at least of the pernicious consequences I have recited, are certainly occasion'd.

Others there are who contend in favour of Tea, and lay all the blame on the water. That the simple elementary fluid is a salutary drink, and preventive of distempers, physicians, I think, generally allow. The materials of our food require plentiful dilution, which water is excellently adapted

apted for, and I believe was designed, by the author of nature, the only liquid for that purpose; but whether the adventitious quality of *heat* may not alter its property, may admit of doubt. Warmth join'd with humidity, in general, unbends the fibres, and enervates the body; and the frequent sipping of warm liquors seems to carry with it such a destructive event. If so, warm water, impregnated with foreign particles, pernicious in themselves, must increase the evil, and the use of Tea cannot be justified on any consideration. But I conceive the fact quite otherwise, for warm water, replete with the wholesome qualities of sage, baum, or any similar *English* vegetable, drank in the same manner with the *Indian* Tea, is not accompanied with any of those hurtful consequences which that Tea produces.

We see now the *qualities* and *effects*

fects of this foreign shrub, and are able to pronounce to whom it is, and is not unwholesome. The local preparation of it, and the effects of its infusion here, illustrate each other, and both shew it to abound with a noxious quality. Happy would it be for thousands in this nation, if this repast was banish'd publick assemblies, as well as their tables at home: for as nothing but a strong constitution, such a one as can bear excesses of almost every kind, is able to combat its agency, the far greater part of its votaries must become a sacrifice to its destroying energy. Of these the beautiful part of the creation, the tender parturient females, demand my principal care. To us is the guardianship of their health, properly, intrusted, and no consideration whatever can justify a neglect of this duty. If these few observations should fall into the hands of any of them, they are conjur'd to believe, that nothing

less than an anxious concern for their ease and felicity, urges me to disapprove of their favourite, Tea. If they feel not any of its pernicious effects presently, I would have them be assur'd, that its operation is insensible, and by slow degrees, and certainly prejudices them in time. There is no pleasure upon earth equal to intercourses with the ladies, but if their tables are furnished with any thing as fatal to health in general, as their charms are to our sex's tranquillity, I am persuaded such a consideration would induce them to remove it. Sage Tea, or a draught of negus, would be a beneficial dilutant; but this *Indian* vegetable, under a grateful fragrancy, and delicious taste, conceals a quality as destructive to health, as the pretender, on the throne of these realms, would be to our rights and liberties.